



## Civilization, Collapse, and the Infrastructure of Accelerationist Terror

A calloused coldness, or meanness, results when our animal senses are cut off for too long from the animate earth, when our ears—inundated by the whooping blare of car alarms and the muted thunder of subways—no longer encounter the resonant silence, as our eyes forget the irregular wildness of things green and growing behind the rectilinear daze.

-David Abram

“The way I see it, sins are only sins when unleashed upon a world that doesn't deserve it...But now, when the world is so ugly and itself unclean, how can you consider action against it as sin? I would go as far to claim that action meant to collapse this place sooner, effectively making way for new life, would be considered holy—maybe even ordain able by a kind of state-aware papacy”

– Mike Ma,

Harassment Architecture (2019) pg. 46

I can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I'm going in” (Gessen, 2018)

-Robert Bowers,

on far-right social network Gab,

before committing the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in U.S. history.

## Looking Forward

We expect cell-based, clandestine networks to increase their focus on disrupting and damaging key infrastructure accessible to those with relatively low levels of technical proficiency (i.e., soft or under-guarded targets). Whereas networks of the past few decades may have focused more on spreading uncertainty and terror within radicalized, ethnic, religious and other communities, in their current strategic formulation, there appears to be a recent focus away from identity-based targeting and towards the disruption of key systems of governance and resource distribution. While past eras of terrorism were distinguished by communicative value—the fear and terror their actions communicated to secondary audiences like racial groups— we suspect current networks will focus on exploiting and advancing existing cleavages and social tensions, catalyzed by and contributing to breakdowns in industrial infrastructure, political-economic structures, and wider climate and ecological systems.

It appears clear that regional, national, and global crises will increase in frequency, scale, and intensity and that such crises contribute to increased human conflict, even civilizational collapse. Crises of climate, resource conflicts, public health, armed conflict, migration, and incidents involving mass casualty violence act as confirmatory indicators that radical action is needed and indeed required to survive. Moreover, these crises, from species decline to viral pandemics, point to shared forms of structural violence, triggering actions from a variety of revolutionary ideologies and interpretations who see such crises as openings for action, with violence begetting more violence as successful attacks prove the viability and accessibility of the approach for others, prompting the desire to

accelerate new attacks. As crises and crisis response become the normative mode of statecraft, these groups may act more frantically, with greater daring, resulting in reduced regard for the protection of life.

In this paper we link crime to the infrastructure underlying current trends and perceptions of socioecological collapse to better consider anti-systemic terror. To do so, we consider the wider socioeconomic and technological mode of production that characterize and generate the very grievances against which resistance movements and accelerationist terrorists across the political spectrum set themselves. We then suggest alternative resolutions to psychological and physical crises such political violence attempts to address more suited to reducing political violence by enacting structural and systemic transformation guided by a framework of peace ecology.

### **Civilization as an Assemblage of Crime**

Environmental harm and social stratification characterize modern society, generating the structural conditions that produce crime. As green criminologist Rob White writes in *Crimes Against Nature* (2008), “social tensions and ecological crisis are inevitably outcomes of the dominant mode of production globally.” The state-corporate nexus deploys violence against the natural world by design, in turn prompting anti-capitalist non-state subcultural resistances. In this regard, a green cultural criminology provides theoretical foundations for understanding ecologically motivated political dissent, positing resistance as responding to primary and secondary (symbiotic) environmental harms.

The human-nonhuman relationship, defined within the logic of capital (endless accumulation), transforms landscapes with particular purpose: “wherever primary commodity production penetrated, however, the tempo of landscape transformation accelerated.” Globalization, neo-colonialism, and the imperial expansion of capital

remake the world system accordingly (“a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory”), reifying and reproducing structural violence, so that radical criminologies have approached crime as conscious or unconscious actions taken on behalf of subjugated classes. Because capital accumulation is contingent on hyperindustrial infrastructural innovations needed to maintain accelerating economic growth, the assemblages and systems necessary to maintain this open-ended growth invite a counter-infrastructural insurgency, or “brisantic politics” that characterizes future resistances. This “paradox of infrastructural brutality” exemplifies the accelerating suicidal tendencies of capital, cascading towards self-annihilation.

The conceptual sensitivity we gain from such analyses prompts our exploration of specific antisystemic communiques by various individuals and groups, whose experience of structural and organizational conditions converge in emergent anti-infrastructural praxis, characterized by the moral imperative to attack the hierarchies of power that generate suffering. In this regard, an inductive and discovery-oriented approach integrating critical inquiry deepens analysis of terror, allowing explicit testing and explanation of the nature of such anti-systemic, anti-infrastructural insurgent actors.

### **Fed -posts or Shit -posts?**

The desire to strike at key infrastructure, as when the neo-Nazi accelerationist network Atomwaffen Division (AWD) sought to blow up power lines and bomb a nuclear power plant, is recurrent within online discussions amongst accelerationists. One Telegram exchange showcases the desire to attack electrical infrastructure, when a moderator posts: “At this point the waiting and capitulation is getting to the point of lazyness, if you arent doing your part what the fuck are you doing.” This charge is responded to:

CUT

LINES

USED

FOR  
TRANSMISSION  
OF  
ELECTRICITY

Minutes later, a second author writes, “Hey kid, you know only about ~17% of arson cases are solved?,” answered by the original poster:

BURN  
TRANSFORMERS  
USED  
FOR  
TRANSMISSION  
OF  
ELECTRICITY

The rhetoric escalates: “Imagine if someone opened fire on a nitrogen based fertilizer plant with incendiary rounds.”

Such comments demonstrate a common delivery style within the “Terrorgram” community, inciting attacks through faux warnings. In the context of COVID-19 restrictions, a user declares, “In quarantined areas, Electricity is the highest priority [REDACTED], if someone were to target a station in California New York, Washington, Italy, Germany, or France, I am certain there would be riots.” The ‘imaginative exercise’ of considering such attacks is repeated across channels:

I hear some people are buying Dexpan in cash, finding cracks in infrastructure, and over time filling those cracks. I hear it’s readily available at large hardware stores. I also hear that Dexpan and other demolition grouts can have ‘blowouts’. I hear that this condition is easy to create by mixing large amounts of it and cramming it into large cracks. **ABSOLUTELY DO NOT DO THIS. IT WILL EXPLODE.**

Here, the instruction and encouragement of attacks, cloaked in faux-warnings, offers ideas and inspiration to potential saboteurs. Likewise, an author shares a chart of household chemicals which when combined, produce toxic and corrosive acids and gasses with the caption, “definitely do not mix these together.” Comments on real-world sabotage provide more scenarios, made hyper-poignant in the wake of the pandemic: “definitely don’t do this,” a user writes, linking to an article about how six ambulances had holes drilled into their tires.

This tongue-in-cheek tone is recurrent in the accelerationist lexicon. In his book *Harassment Architecture*, a frequent addition to “required reading” lists for accelerationists, author Mike Ma employs this same approach:

why not funnel your nihilism into something absurd and productive. You don’t care about this place? Wonderful. Take a rifle and empty one entire drum magazine into the windows of AAA. Empty the magazine and don’t look back unless everything in that hornet’s nest is contaminated with lead. You don’t care about anything? Let me write a message about something that pains me, tape it to your chest, and send you into AAAAAAAAAA for a memorable public self-execution. Let me cover you in plastic explosives and take you on a field trip to the largest power station in America. (Please note: Do not do any of these things. Especially do not cover your face and destroy the many and largely unprotected power stations and cell towers...Do not become the sort of person who gets really good at blowing power stations up while never getting caught.)

In this passage, Ma clearly advocates for not only unbridled mass shootings, but suicide bombings targeting power stations, using the paraenthetical aside to imply the faux warning method. Ma continues this approach throughout the book, using the ‘I hear some people’ approach showcased in the Dexpan grout posting:

I hear some people are buying extension ladders, going up on various store roofs, and pulling the disconnects on their heating and cooling devices...buying tennis rackets and hitting medium-sized pebbles into wealthy and ethnic neighborhoods, from extremely far distances away. I hear some of the pebbles are smashing Escalade sunroofs, McMansion mega bay windows, and more. I hear nobody can figure out where it’s coming from...buying machetes in bulk and leaving them next to the homeless while they sleep...learning how to build

handheld EMPs on the internet and shutting off people's electronics in secret...buying burner phones and calling ambulances to places, over and over...throwing screws in news station parking lots...getting jobs and immediately quitting...feeding journalists completely false stories and making them look bad...putting caution tape across busy streets and highways...running through car dealerships and smashing the windshield out of everyone on the lot at night I hear some people are hiding bluetooth speakers in places and broadcasting racial slurs at full volume...making homemade explosives and knocking down cell towers...making homemade explosives and disintegrating local power substations...stealing construction machines and driving them into lakes.

While the sarcastic, tongue-in-cheek warnings clearly identify and advocate pathways towards social tension and disorder, it is also clear accelerationists are parroting the call. Not only are calls to 'Read Harassment Architecture' frequently circulated online (alongside calls to 'Read Siege'), the explicit recombination of accelerationist neo-Nazi activism and Ma's text are frequently repackaged in memes.

Whether telling people not to fill cement cracks with explosives, fire incendiaries into electrical infrastructure, or knock over cellular towers, the cumulative effect is a collective anti-social brainstorm—an ever-growing list of ways to foster, perpetuate, and extend chaotic disorder, not unlike the fictional proto-fascist patriarchal army "Project Mayhem" that attacks modern civilization through vandalism, sabotage, and homemade bombs, remaking the image of manliness from passive consumer into violent survivalist.

Prior white power movement texts like *The Turner Diaries*, operationalized by Federal building bomber Timothy McVeigh, similarly provide open-source blueprints for targets and a prolonged, multi-year strategy. In this regard, such literature "gamifies" attacks, borrowing and weaponizing cyberbullying and harassment tactics from the gaming community for far-right real world violence.

In March 2020, the FBI disrupted a plot to bomb a hospital with a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device amid the Coronavirus pandemic, determining the suspect “was a potentially violent extremist, motivated by religious, racial, and anti-government beliefs.” Indeed, he posted on various telegram channels, suggesting the attack was part of the wider accelerationist copycat echo chamber. Another man with similar neo-Nazi interests was arrested after allegedly planning an attack on an electrical substation, while others, like the former Canadian Armed Forces reservist connected to the neo-Nazi accelerationist group The Base, sought to derail trains, poison water supplies, and open fire on a gun rights rally with the intention of starting a civil war. Power substations and transformers, water filtration plants, nuclear reactors, propane storage facilities, suspension pylons, and other critical infrastructure have all been previous targets for white revolutionaries.

Moreover, to promote these goals, accelerationists attempt to create favorable contexts for left-wing groups, deep green luddites, neo-Nazi occultist-tinged militants, and bomb-deploying eco-extremists alike to proliferate:

There is no greater priority than achieving the goals of Accelerationism. Its purpose to us and to our collaborators is to create an environment for Radicalism (Fascism, Nationalism, Anarchist, Communists, Regionalists, and any fringe radical belief) to become common place.

In what follows, we outline examples of the varied networks’ targeting of infrastructure, reviewing the groups within an emerging taxonomic framework. In each case, the desire to precipitate social collapse through structural breakdown, social disorder, antagonism, and what leftists term “social war” creates conditions for a shared, if contradictory, approach to insurrectionary action against modern



society, itself understood as a source of suffering, intending to inspire real-world events.

## **Anti-Civilizational Tendencies**

The obvious sage of targeting critical infrastructure is Theodore Kaczynski (“the Unabomber”), whose 17-year bombing campaign targeted individuals involved in the production and maintenance of the ‘techno industrial system.’ During his bombing campaign, not only did Kaczynski dispatch explosive devices to university staff and faculty, scientists, executives, a computer retailer, and a lobbyist, he also targeted mass air transport infrastructure, placing a device on a Chicago to D.C. American Airlines flight, an office of Boeing in Washington, and one device successfully injuring the President of United Airlines. In Kaczynski’s view,

There is no way of reforming or modifying the system so as to prevent it from depriving people of dignity and autonomy. If the system breaks down the consequences will still be very painful. But the bigger the system grows the more disastrous the results of its breakdown will be, so if it is to break down it had best break down sooner rather than later.

Compare to oft-quoted American neo-Nazi James Mason, whose newsletters for the National Socialist Liberation Front were edited as *Siege: The Collected Writings of James Mason*, “required reading “ for many accelerationist groups:

To destroy the System is primary. To destroy the System without destroying ourselves is desirable. But with the System destroyed a new Age of Man can begin. Until the System is destroyed, by whatever means necessary, none of these fine plans will ever amount to anything more than a dream.

While the above theorists are explicitly anti-leftist, Aric McBay, anti-fascist and co-founder of the radical feminist and environmental group Deep Green Resistance, writes similarly: “industrial civilization cannot last forever; the question is whether anything will be left once it is gone. The sooner collapse happens the better for the planet and those who live after.”

Nor is the desire to resist civilization by attacking infrastructure restricted to males, but includes women of the far- and post-left as well. Natasha Alvarez, in her novella *Liminal*, outlines a mother’s strategy to protect her child from the “death throes of a globalized, technologically driven civilization”:

Find the weak points. The factories and oil rigs, the transformers and the grids, the levees and the dams, the refineries, coal mines, gas mains, and government buildings. The banks. The million different pieces that make the whole thing tick. Aim for property destruction, not people...Figure out the weak points, the bottlenecks in the system. Plan an action, invite someone else to do the same...Finally it’s just you. Alone. Wedding ring on slender finger, photo of your blond haired baby daughter tucked close to your heart, and the smooth, cold steel of explosives strapped against warm and milky breasts. Woman, made weapon.

Such attacks align to what her green anarchist publisher terms, “the primal war,” attacking structures of “domestication”: power lines and transformers, telephone and fiber optic cables, pipelines and the natural gas industry, uranium mines, aqueducts and nuclear generation stations, self-driving cars, hacks on electric grids and the “internet of things,” attacks on police, universities, professors, researchers, journalists, non-profits, technologists, and corporate executives are all detailed, “for educational purposes only.”

Overlap between these insurgent worldviews is showcased by The Green Brigade, an international eco-fascist organization promoting themselves on Telegram as

an organization consisting of openly accelerationist, Eco-Extremist members focused on tearing down the system that exploits our land, animals, and people. These individuals prioritize and practice an autonomous environmentalist lifestyle, with a fascist emphasis and with a hatred for modern civilization.

Claiming responsibility for the arson of a mink farm in Sweden and disbanded in the wake of arrests of members of accelerationist group The Base, their imagery shows an individual with their face overlaid with a Nazi-era totenkopf, indicating allegiance with Siege-centered accelerationism, and holding Kaczynski's well known manifesto, Industrial Society and its Future.

## **Decisive Ecological Warfare**

The attempt to accelerate collapse through insurrection and terror is not limited to the far right, and includes milieus of radical environmentalists, green anarchists, deep ecologists, biocentrists, primitivists, and radical feminists like the network Deep Green Resistance (DGR), whose name is appropriated by a “nationalist environmentalism” telegram channel. In each case, the collapse strategy is anti-majoritarian, anti-mass, and seeks to increase tension, strain, and fatigue on the system, speeding up collapse rather than engaging in electoral politics. Many, like the armed wing of the white nationalist Northwestern Front, Pine Tree Gang, adopt the ideas and strategy of anti-technologist Kaczynski to actively accelerate collapse.

From a ‘supermax,’ limited communication prison in Florence, Colorado, where he is serving eight life sentences, Kaczynski states:

what has to be done is not try to persuade the majority of people that we're right, so much as to try to increase tensions in society to the point where things start to break down, when people get uncomfortable enough so that they're going to rebel. Now the question is how do you increase those tensions?

Elsewhere, he suggests five industries as critical targets for any anti-technological war against modern society, where “radicals ought to put in some time thinking how to hit the system where it really hurts. By legal means, of course.”

1. Electro-power industry
2. Communications industry
3. Computer industry
4. Propaganda industry
5. Biotechnology industry

While green anarchists criticize Kaczynski's essay for its authoritarianism and insufficiently considering resistance as an “outcome of spontaneous rage...[against] the civilized order, and most importantly a strike against domestication,” in the years following his capture and imprisonment, nonviolent clandestine networks of eco-saboteurs emerged globally, and in the U.S. gained notoriety in the late 1990s with the emergence of the Earth Liberation Front (ELF). ELF's use of arson and relatively low rate of infiltration and arrests led to the FBI naming it the primary domestic national security threat, and while reported occurrences of so-called ‘eco-terrorist’ attacks have declined since a height in the early 2000s its influence remains widespread.

Drawing from the logic of these radical movements and others is DGR, whose strategic and analytical frameworks come from the works of American philosopher and activist, Derrick Jensen and occasional co-authors Lierre Kieth and Aric McBay. In their 2011 book by the same name, the three authors make explicit the strategy and aim of accelerating structural collapse and discuss a dual approach:

What if there was a serious aboveground resistance movement combined with a small group of underground networks working in tandem?...abovegrounders would work to build sustainable and just communities wherever they were, and would use both direct and indirect action to try to curb the worst excesses of those in power, to

reduce the burning of fossil fuels, to struggle for social and ecological justice. Meanwhile, the undergrounders would engage in limited attacks on infrastructure (often in tandem with aboveground struggles), especially energy infrastructure, to try to reduce fossil fuel consumption and overall industrial activity. The overall thrust of this plan would be to use selective attacks to accelerate collapse in a deliberate way, like shoving a rickety building.

The authors write that attacks organized via decentralized networks of autonomous cells would “not be symbolic attacks...[but] serious attacks designed to be effective but timed and targeted to minimize the ‘collateral damage’ on humans.” They note strikes would target fossil fuel and electrical power consumption and involve reducing the availability of these resources to force a focus and investment in just, sustainable, and autonomous human communities and the recovery of subsistence bases.

In an “underground action calendar” on the group’s affiliated website, actions like pipeline attacks, cyberattacks on fossil fuel systems, and incendiary devices against freight rail networks are highlighted to “publicize and normalize the use of militant and underground tactics in the fight for justice and sustainability.” Through networking, organizing, and mobilizing aboveground and underground resistance, asymmetric attacks of sabotage are designed to disrupt essential systems and dismantle critical infrastructure:

1. Financial systems
2. Extraction infrastructure
3. The energy grid
4. Communications infrastructure
5. Technology industry

Also included as targets are the system’s values: *expansion, hierarchy, stability, efficiency, white supremacy, human supremacy, male supremacy, comfort, ignorance, consumerism, progress, and scientism*. DGR’s advocates thus promotes as its basic goals, “to disrupt and dismantle industrial civilization; to thereby remove the ability of the powerful to exploit the marginalized and destroy the planet,” attacking and rejecting industrial civilization’s core structures and values, as where groups “destroy train tracks at critical intersections, rendering coal transportation impossible.”

In this regard, earth defense movements are encouraged to adopt “similar convictions of strategic rigor,” and coordinate “decisive attacks against multiple such nodes [that] will have an exponential effect, and can cause cascading failures within the system.” These infrastructural attacks by underground networks are thought to accelerate in frequency once evidence of collapse surfaces.

Attacks on energy infrastructure would become more common as oil supplies diminish... These attacks would steepen the energy slide initially. This would have significant economic impacts, but it would also turn the tide on population growth... [those in power] would use resistance as an excuse to seize more power to institute martial law or overt fascism.

Part of the job of the resistance movement is to increase the cost and decrease the returns of empire-scale complexity. This doesn't require instantaneous collapse or global dramatic actions. Even small actions can increase the cost of complexity and accelerate the good parts of collapse while tempering the bad.

In his multi-volume *Endgame* series, Jensen argues for techno-industrial breakdown as a prerequisite for peace: “if these folks who are visualizing world peace really are interested in actualizing world peace, they should also be visualizing industrial collapse. And bringing it about.” Transcribing a discussion with a hacker about “bringing it all down,” Jensen writes:

I think that twelve hackers could take down the electrical grid of all of North America, a blackout lasting for months. That blackout itself would take out key components. Of course those in power would immediately start retooling, and because they have more resources than we do they'd eventually be able to come back online. We'd have to hit them again in the meantime.

DGR co-author McBay speaks of related strategies, writing:

...resistance networks decide to shut down entire distribution systems for oil, coal, or gas. This means, again, aboveground and underground organizations taking action and looking for bottlenecks... Aboveground groups might do that with physical blockades. Underground groups might sabotage rail lines. Both are careful to target infrastructure in a way that avoids harming humans.

The point of this stage is to accelerate the industrial collapse that will already be underway...While those on the front lines are shutting down the infrastructure that's killing the planet, there is another, much larger group of people working to rebuild local, democratic political structures. They are growing local food. They are rebuilding sustainable communities with all that entails.

In this regard, varied attacks on infrastructure should not be seen as sporadic or stochastic, but integrated into a wider approach to an emerging and increasingly self-evident cross-cultural "accelerationist" strategy.

### **Infrastructure and Supply Chains: Cross-Cultural Targets**

Despite the radical environmental movement's focus on disrupting infrastructure, their aim diverges from the Siege-inspired far-right who fetishize igniting power stations for the sake of an emerging ethno-state. In ELF's first communique, anonymous authors identified their role as the "burning rage of a dying planet...to speed up the collapse of industry, to scare the rich, and to undermine the foundations of the state," by disrupting operations of targeted entities, cutting into profit margins of lucrative extractive industries, and forcing companies to pay to secure them.

Like DGR's "underground action calendar," ALF, ELF, and hundreds of lesser known unnamed actions are reported in carefully curated Diary of Action pages, such as those maintained by ALF/ELF supporters. As the *Animal* Liberation Front is more active historically than the *Earth* Liberation Front (beginning decades earlier), these incidents feature more heavily in targeting trends. Examining targeting patterns of the wider radical environmental movement frequently labeled "eco-terrorists," the most commonly attacked target type (across 27,000+ incidents analyzed between 1973-2010) was retail stores, especially those selling fur and leather, constituting 19% of attacks. Following retailers, attacks targeted businesses selling animal-based foodstuffs (e.g., butchers, delis), farms, ranches, animal breeders, and restaurants serving animal products, intending to put them out of business, targeting the infrastructure of species exploitation and the mechanisms through which speciesism is violently enacted.

Famed animal liberation activist Peter Young speaks to the wider strategy, encouraging clandestine saboteurs to abandon targeting

retail sites and instead locate and disrupt the systems and processes supporting those retailers:

I want to propose a new model for the ALF...The first element of strategy is to avoid small-scale sabotage. Go only for high impact actions...The second strategic element is that ALF actions should always go after weak links and vulnerable industries. Not nearly soft targets...target the infrastructure of industries, not the retail end...For every 100 McDonald's there's probably one meat distributor. For every 10 meat distributors, there's probably one slaughterhouse. Think about how you can move up the chain and go to the source. How you can go after an industry's infrastructure.

Young shifts the focus of ALF away from symbolic "soft targets" towards a focused disruption of animal industry infrastructure. While farms, ranches, breeders, and fast food storefronts may not appear as such when compared to the electrical grid or cellular towers, concerted attacks on both the retail and supply chains of animal agriculture provide a similar strategy for economic sabotage increasing the likelihood of the industry's collapse. The strategy was made explicit in a series of publications authored by anonymously ALF supporters which mapped the fur industry's supply chains, bottlenecks, and points of vulnerability through the distribution of detailed target lists and tactical, 'how-to' guidance.

When examining *only* the ELF in 700+ attacks across fourteen countries at the height of the network's activity (1996-2009), attacks targeting automobiles (especially SUVs) and phone booths constitute more than 46% of the total incidents. Yet when examining single target incidents, the most commonly attacked ELF targets are construction and industrial equipment (14%), homes under construction and model homes (13%), and business properties (12%). These are followed by attacks targeting automobiles/SUVs (10%) and phone booths (8%), trends corroborated by other scholars and intelligence reports.

The degree to which radical ecological defense movements have been successful stems from the anonymity and decentralization each cell maintains. In this regard, movement recruiters focus on populating new cells rather than joining pre-existing ones, *becoming* the vision rather than *joining* those already in service. The North American Earth Liberation Press Office concurs with such a strategy writing (and repeated in a later recruitment videos):



How does one become a member of the ELF? The ELF does not have any sort of physical membership list or meetings you can attend to become involved. Remember, the ELF revolves around not a physical base or classically designed structure, but instead an ideology. If you believe in the ELF ideology and you follow a certain set of widely published guidelines, you can conduct actions and become part of the ELF...create [your] own close knit anonymous cell made up of trustworthy and sincere people. Remember the ELF and each cell within it are anonymous not only to one another but also to the general public. So there is not a realistic chance of becoming active in an already existing cell. Take initiative, form your own cell and do what needs to be done!

Though early propaganda of neo-Nazi accelerationist networks consistently advocated to "Join your local Nazis," or "save your race join The Base," a series of arrests due to recruitment of undercover agents or journalists may have swayed these groups to more fully operationalize this style of leaderless resistance.

Days after American neo-Nazi and AWD-spiritual leader James Mason announced the formal dissolution of the group, a splinter factor (or individual) published a 'program' for AWD:

To those still within the framework of this 'movement' or 'mass-strategy' program, this may be a bit hard to comprehend...Anyone on Earth can be 'Atomwaffen Division', for the premise is an operation that exists to antagonize within the framework of the group, with varied networks and resources...anyone with the appropriate self-determination can print their own fliers. Anyone can assemble a uniform, patch or mask. This cannot be stopped, and there is no reason to stop it. Atomwaffen Division has no 'membership list; or 'card carrying official membership', therefore the operative is not a 'member'.

Comparing this language to ELF aboveground supporters in 2001, the similarity is plain, mirroring white power activists such as Tom Metzger, former Klan leader and founder of White Aryan Resistance. Metzger's strategic commentary strategy for "white lone wolves" was included as a central component of a 2017 AWD video released in the wake of the Charlottesville, Virginia rally:

You won't see us at polling booths. You won't see us at cluster fucks like took place in Virginia this weekend. We have been through that

years ago and found it was not a viable tactic in combating our opposition...If I were to be inclined towards these ill thought out gatherings I would do it the opposite way, I would seek out my opposition's meeting places and rallies and their homes and pay them a visit at our own opportune time...As far as parading for the press, we're never going to do that. The struggle is going to take more time to develop for what you could call an insurrection or a civil war, it's coming.

Across the ideological spectrum, anti-systemic groups are experimenting within similar organizational, tactical, and strategic approaches. For ELF, forming cells to act within a constrained strategic realm to economically sabotage targets by damaging property was always an objective. For AWD and transnational fascist cells, a similar movement towards a typology of action exists—adapting definitions of membership. If a cell cannot be *joined*, the responsibility to *act* reverts to the individual, the lone wolf, the network of leaderless resistance organized through “phantom cells,” or what post-9/11 jihadists termed Global Islamic Resistance. Though radically divergent in their vision, rhetoric, and approach, networks like ELF and AWD share key goal-centric aspects. Neither desired to be a mass movement of followers per se, but rather a minoritarian movement engaged in attack—sabotage, vandalism, and arson by clandestine cells. These disparate attacks were linked to one another by movement spokespeople, inter and intra-movement publications, and collectively form a shared trajectory. Both networks want adherents to act, organize, and attack like them, without collectively organizing with one another into a known, named force. These networks do not desire majority participation, as Kaczyński said, but rather affect the majority of the population, disrupting key systems and structures to undermine a common enemy.

While affinities between radical environmentalists, eco-extremists, and Kaczyński is well documented, as are connections between neo-Nazism and violent jihadism, the possibility for correspondence between ecological resistance movements and violent jihadi terrorism is also apparent. Osama Bin Laden, for instance, in an unsigned letter “to the American people,” calls for a “great revolution for freedom” to prompt political leaders to end the war on Islam and make “a rational decision to save humanity from the harmful [greenhouse] gases that threaten its destiny.” Speaking to “the West,” bin Laden writes of “the tyranny of the control of capital by large companies,” and for the

American youth to understand and “relive the [revolutionary] history of their ancestors and the conditions in their country. Due to the commonality of targets and organizational capacity, Kaczynski considers the affinities between anti-civilization terrorists and Jihadis. Noting a rejection of modernity, he questions the extent to which “it might be useful to our movement to carry on discussions with the Muslim militants and see whether there is sufficient common ground there for any sort of alliance.”

As the infrastructure underlying extractive capitalist economy destabilizes traditional lifeways and ecological values, the resulting insecurity, factionalism, and securitization, a combined attack on the fundamental institutions and structures of modernity emerges: “when communities lack enough time to adapt to all the innovation and change, its members may fall short of their aspirations; anxiety and alienation bubble up, and violence can erupt along prevailing political and religious fault lines.” The insurrectionary accelerationism detailed above offers a corresponding ideology, driven by an economic mode that exacerbates global antagonisms to threaten peace and security. Anticipating socioecological collapse within the next decade, one accelerationist Telegram user comments:

This will come to pass in the 2020's, and the deaths will be mainly focused in the 3rd world, as our resources will be put on hold, and the hand outs they use to supplement and over breed will dry up. Medicine, food, all will go away, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> world will empty for us to expand into...There will be a guerilla force in America that will outnumber the armies of the world. Knowledgeable vets, teamed up with angry young white men. The North American continent will shake with fear before you, and the sheep of the white left will worship you as their new master.

We suggest these expectations of race war stem from infrastructural constraints of the economic mode, systematically inducing its own collapse, evoking Robert Kaplan's prediction of the threat nearly two decades ago:

Urban crime may...‘develop into low-intensity conflict by coalescing along racial, religious, social, and political lines.’ ...future wars will be those of communal survival, aggravated or, in many cases, caused by environmental scarcity. These wars will be subnational, meaning that it will be hard for states and local governments to protect their own citizens physically. This is how many states will ultimately die. As state

power fades—and with it the state's ability to help weaker groups within society, not to mention other states—peoples and cultures around the world will be thrown back upon their own strengths and weaknesses, with fewer equalizing mechanisms to protect them. Whereas the distant future will probably see the emergence of a racially hybrid, globalized man, the coming decades will see us more aware of our differences than of our similarities.

## **Ecological Criminals and Collapse Criminology**

If the dominant political and economic mode requires ecocide and exploitation, producing scarcity while inducing criminality, such harms and crimes are driven by the infrastructure that underlies it. As such, the state-corporate nexus and insurgent movements exist in dynamic tension:

Where there is domination, there is resistance to domination; where new forms of domination, new forms of resistance ultimately surge to act upon the specific patterns of domination...a growing number of activists have come to believe that 'change will be brought about, not through the mediation of professional politicians, but by individual and collective participation in social affairs.

In confronting overexploitation and its social effects, anti-infrastructural resistance engages "hierarchically organized governments fostering and protecting social systems of stratification" by targeting the interface between any social system and natural principles, intending to realign them and resolve "the relentless struggle between the [irreconcilable] contradictions of consumer capitalism and efforts to maintain a clean and healthy environment" outside of legal means.

Movements willing to confront the unsustainable nature of modern society thus represent a rupture with the reigning cultural logic, threatening corporate power and those systems upholding that power. For these groups, embracing terrorism as a strategy for social change is an embrace of militant struggle against the perceived

corruption of the state-corporate nexus, the inability to govern justly, and the commodification of beauty. Moreover, as electoral politics is similarly captured by this logic, there becomes no possibility for political solutions or voluntary transformation.

Drawing from our linguistic analysis, in-groups define themselves as existentially threatened by constructed out-groups, with retributive violence against them assumed necessary responses to resolve the existential crisis, conforming to J.M. Berger's definition of extremism. Crimes of terror thereby signal grievances generated by the very socioecological and cultural contexts that produce them, signaling the desire for systemic and structural transformation where governance is perceived to have failed, and suggesting pathways addressing the underlying dynamics may be more effective than deterrence in countering violent extremism.

Ultimately, the accelerating rate of return on scales of economy, dependent on environmental degradation required by open-ended economic growth models systematically increases rates of disease, crime, even perhaps insurrectionary violence driven by these same underlying forces. Violent extremism, terror campaigns, and insurrectionary attacks seek to eliminate those structures; such crimes indicate unjust and alienating social conditions, grievances contingent upon the underlying dynamics generating scarcity, solastalgia, and the context for extremist belief systems and terrorist acts to proliferate. As far-right researcher Brian Hughes writes, the "emerging [accelerationist] eco-radicalism lies in the tangible, material experience of life under global capitalism in the age of eco-crisis...[searching] for a future beyond techno-capital's calamitous success."

We suggest an approach to terror then, where extremist violence and insurrection articulate a system-wide critique that rejects representative politics, attacks external threats with retributive violence, and seeks autonomy and liberation from a specific world-ecology and economic mode, "the system."

In this framework, criminality, violent extremism, and accelerationist terror arise as a biosemiotic process where individuals and

communities, facing existential threat, interpret surrounding environmental signals in mythological terms to guide (mal)adaptive strategies and evolutionary pathways. By linking crime to collapse, and attributing both to the infrastructure and economic mode undergirding the suicidal logic of the state-corporate nexus, criminal behavior is better understood as embedded within a “nested model of violent extremism,” where extremist networks and belief systems are themselves enmeshed in wider socioecological contexts. Crime then offers empirical measures of socioeconomic and psychocultural health, suggesting greater likelihood for terror where collective strains remain.

In this regard, effective preventative intervention requires “the coordinated delivery of services from numerous agencies, but these agencies [are] severely fragmented, resulting in ineffective preventative intervention.” That is, a sense of economic injustice is psychologically present where capacity for services is degraded; and in an era of environmental scarcity and climate chaos, increasingly so. Socioecological disorganization is thus assumed to induce crime where demographics, climate, and environmental scarcity exacerbate criminogenic mechanisms, leading to harms, intercultural conflict, and violence, including a breakdown in social order.

This breakdown of order stems from the structural composition of the “Treadmill of Production” (ToP), whose techniques “increased not only production but also pollution and raw material extraction. In this way, the drivers of ToP accelerated ecological disorganization and destruction, behaviors we have defined as green crimes from the perspective of the ecosystem.” Further, economic stratification and overexploitation of natural resources determines the lifecycle of any given society, the over-exploitation of either—structurally required for capitalism and industrial growth models—are independently found to result in societal collapse:

Oligarchic states tend to be politically unstable, environmentally destructive, and prone to collapse...[putting] unsustainable pressures on the social, economic, political, and ecological foundations of

civilization...it is the relations of domination themselves, rather than the individual agents who enact them, that are the locus of systemic dysfunction.

Capitalism's treadmill of production, accelerated by industrial infrastructure and capital accumulation, drives collapse, inequality, and scarcity, conditions that trigger criminogenic mechanisms, encouraging criminal behavior and increasing the likelihood for terrorism, extremism, and violence. Crime as an indicator of inequity and the failure of governance thereby signals an unjust social order against which criminality offers pathways to avoid sustained deprivation while challenging the legitimacy of a sociopolitical arrangement that rejects a fundamental cosmological principle: "operationally, those systems capable of utilizing optimum amounts of energy tend to survive, and those that cannot are nonrandomly eliminated."

## **Sacred Narratives and a Cosmology of Terror**

The degree to which a social order is rejected and delegitimated provides a marker of political and socioecological health, with insurrectionary violence signaling the desire for systemic change. Terrorism may be understood in terms of Marx's 'primitive rebellion' thesis, where agents move against and within an untenable social form. This critical appraisal proceeds from the insight that, as Marx writes:

The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness.

Infrastructural variables, as the principal interface between culture and nature whose energy restraints are "passed on to the structural and superstructural components," become causal chains affecting cultural evolution. The mode of economic production in material life – technologies and techniques used to harness food and energy and

exchange and distribute goods – in turn constrains the operations of social organizations, structures, and value systems, as well as the wider cosmology and worldview.

The effect is to render adaptive strategies virtually sacred, while making taboo (criminal) maladaptive behaviors antithetical to the infrastructural arrangement. Ideology, in this case a sense of the sacred, is thus a product of place, grounded in economic social function and projected into thoughts and feelings, experienced as 'natural,' at times 'divine' forces. Conversely, the phenomenological brutality and physical repulsion of the mode of production and economic base is similarly projected into the mind and will of constituent members, instilling disbelief in or the outright rejection of such infrastructures (and economic mode) "by people who have become intellectually and emotionally emancipated from the existing system."

If thoughts are complex elaborations of what we do and how we feel, those techniques necessary for cultures to remain within the carrying capacity of a bioregion have a psychological correlate: adaptive relationships communicated in sacred narratives and ritualized organizational processes institutionalize social rules– survival imprints able to defuse external stressors and ensure cultural resilience. Yet when maladaptive structures or social norms themselves become recognized as existential threats, the social malfunctioning requires a re-establishment of rules. Hence the indispensable role of resource managers who assume traditional political or spiritual leadership, ensuring proper behaviors, exposing unrestrained resource exploitation, and correcting violations of community norms.

Sacred narratives are thus organized around homeostatic survival functions used as the template for neural organization and cultural continuity. They offer a "mythobiology" of sorts, uniting cosmology, theology, and anthropology ("cosmotheanthropy") so that by making sense of environmental signals, symbols able to situate the human community within a wider cosmological context establish and perpetuate ideal socioecological orders through appeals to the sacred: a "blueprint for ecological adaptation, positing worldviews as the organizing concept behind the cultural ecology of a group," to facilitate "cooperative social behavior aimed at the conservation of ecological balance as the ultimate desirable quality."



Similarly, infrastructure and social behaviors, initially institutionalized to maintain cultural resilience yet reinterpreted as maladaptive (degrading landscapes and communities), are delegitimized through attacks on power structures that articulate a system-level critique. The insurrectionist then attempts a similar ecological role as a resource manager, assuming political and spiritual leadership by drawing on environmental observations, collective memory, and personal experience to “cure a social malfunctioning” through violence. Sympathizers likewise read the landscape and communicate in quasi-religious terms their interpretations of existential threats, receiving and redistributing ecological interpretations in information hubs, authoring new attacks and critiques that flow through networks and feedback in self-reinforcing arenas.

We can then consider ideologically motivated violence as emerging from an environment pushed out of its psychological carrying capacity. In a sense, the wider ecosystem ‘acts through’ individual agents situated in deteriorating ecological contexts: the terrorist becomes a symptom of disorder, attacking the modern social structure designed to maintain stability, “the spontaneous suicide of the defense mechanism supposed to protect the organism from external aggression...itself working to destroy its own protection, to immunize itself against its own immunity,” a symptom “occurring within the system that should have predicted it.” In this way can we understand Mike Ma’s defense of accelerationism as an attempt to provide a kind of ‘social medicine’:

When I say ‘to accelerate’ or ‘to push forward’ or ‘to lean into’, I don’t mean towards a better world – not immediately at least. We are leaning into the collapse. We are pushing for the ignition of cleansing fire. I am acceleration and I am the reaction. This way nobody knows who’s doing what or why. I am the one dumping magazine after magazine into a crowded gay nightclub...I am the world’s fire and I am the world burning.

In this regard, insurrectionary accelerationism represents the desire for systemic transformation; and with it, the conditions needed to survive the unsustainable nature of exploitative relations, joining an active eschatology that engages the perceived concretized evil of civilization with redemptive violence. As such, we can suggest political extremism as an attempt at ecological criticism, with criminology as an opportunity to theorize (rightly or wrongly) about ecological resilience.

## Peace Ecology and Structural Conflict

A peace-centric approach to conflict denotes “peace” as a social *goal*, rather than an absence of violence. Moreover, this peace studies framework notes a type of violence “built into the social structure,” requiring structural, system-level, emancipatory strategies and solutions. Structural conflicts are expressions of *structural* inequalities; structural violences, involving “inequality, above all in the distribution of power.” These violent inequities kill slowly and anonymously, obscured by cultural and ideological systems which “erase the history and consciousness of the[ir] social origins.”

This *structural violence* is best mitigated by fostering justice, equality, and peace (i.e. positive peace), rather than trying to reduce or avoid violence, inequality, and exclusion (i.e. negative peace). Only through intervening in these inequalities can we hope to alleviate the threat of violence spurred on by eco-anxiety and predictions of collapse. In critically examining the infrastructural deprivation and delegitimation produced in specific sociocultural contexts, structures directly producing violence as a necessary premise for socioeconomic organization can be identified, undermined, and transformed, no longer destabilizing peace processes by leaving intact those structures and arrangements that maintain nonreciprocal relations. Here, we recognize “conflict as a struggle to maintain or overthrow systems of domination.” As environmental philosopher Bron Taylor writes:

Only by addressing environmental degradation at its varied roots will we reduce environmental decline. Only thus will we halt the threat it poses to human livelihoods, the insult it represents to the deeply held moral duties that many individuals feel toward non-human nature; only then will we eliminate environmental-related violence.

The same can be applied to the networks of accelerationist violence and counter-infrastructural insurgent activism presently under

examination; without addressing perceived marginalization and dystopian realities, a continuation of violence and sabotage, catalyzed by fears of destructive ecological breakdown, is expected.

Yet these sorts of narrative-driven strategies, failing to conform to traditional structural notions, and often framed outside of the language of securitization as holistic, prefigurative, and revolutionary solutions to seemingly-intractable problems, are kept beyond the realm of security. The more a strategic solution focuses on creating *positive* peace, the less likely it is considered a viable strategy for securitization or included in the discourse on policy and practice. Moreover, this perceived powerlessness is multiplied when modernity's increasingly grandiose promises appear under-fulfilled. This analytical frame (Relative Deprivation Theory within social movement studies or conflict resolution) provides a useful tool in discussing these disconnects—the psycho-social influence of groupthink and echo chambers which deepen towards intractability in ever-immersive digital communities. Paradoxically, improved conditions may not translate to perceived gains, so a strategic approach must involve *both* improving material conditions as well as narrative shifts which communicate these gains.

Further, pathways for structural change and systemic transformation that are demonstrably more effective than violence are necessary. Especially important will be creating spaces that invite reflection on personal and collective desires and find outlets that address these concerns, yet complexify and provide nuance to proposed solutions, requiring time, space, and compassion for those who turn to extremism. As we have attempted to root crime in the context of socioecological collapse at the hands of a seemingly suicidal infrastructure, we suggest crime reduction can occur by preventing (or otherwise mitigating the effects of) that collapse by establishing post-hegemonic, autonomous, self-sufficient communities to grow a life-place politics. Such politics would aim to reconfigure economic relationships, with biological density reducing criminality by alleviating scarcity and developing and restoring decentralized, ecologically sensitive techniques. Research already suggests visibility-preserving vegetation as a negative predictor for violence and crime due to psychological stabilization, strengthened territoriality, lowered incivilities and levels of aggression, improvement of regional image, and increased informal surveillance with greater use, offering a basic axiom: “the more vegetation, the less crime.” More research is required in this arena.

Though this passage may resemble more of a leftist prefigurative utopia, contemporary fascist, eco-fascist, and far-right communities mimic similar discourses, speaking of farming as a survival mechanism, with accelerationist networks promoting survivalism while advocating for collapse. Eco-fascist theorists have similarly advocated systemic, prefigurative change. For example, Finnish deep ecologist and eco-fascist thinker Pentti Linkola spoke of reducing private car transportation and repurposing the road system, fostering aggressive population control, ending immigration, international trade, and “growth”, and “a centralised government and the tireless control of citizens.” For theorists like Linkola, social critique is bound up within a destructive prefiguration where the old is dismantled to make room for the new— roads taken apart and turned into orchards—straddling the nihilism of ITS, accelerationists, a wider transnational fascist milieu, and the utopian prefiguration more commonly seen in anti-authoritarian leftist movements of anarchists and Marxists.

## **Conclusion: An Interpretive Framework**

Today, the twin threats of climate change and political violence pose tremendous crises, yet few identify the commonality driving both. In linking crime to the political, economic, and socioecological dimensions of the dominant economic mode, we can better see anti-systemic political violence as a signifier of socioecological collapse, the unjust relationships driving it, and the desire for alternative social organization. As such, viable solutions emerge:

the ‘solution’ to insurrectionary attack is systemic, revolutionary change that reduces domination and marginalization...to ‘solve’ the insurrectionary critique would require system-level change aimed at a deconstruction of that very system and, as such, is unlikely to be embraced by power elites...[the problem is found] in the articulation of a system-level critique which rejects political representationalism, abhors domination, and seeks nothing short of total liberation.

In short, criminal acts, nested in extremist belief systems, emerge from wider socioecological dynamics, indicating systemic interventions in approaches to structural transformation that avoid the accelerating breakdown of social order altogether, exacerbating the

very conditions precipitating accelerationist attacks. To be clear, “Collapse can be avoided, and population can reach a steady state at maximum carrying capacity if the rate of depletion of nature is reduced to a sustainable level and if resources are distributed equitably.”

The structural relationships generating conditions of deprivation that delegitimize governing bodies and the economic mode itself must therefore be understood as themselves constituting a threat to national security; accelerationist violence is a nihilist symptom, attacking perceived unjust and alienating social conditions that generate grievances contingent upon the centralized infrastructure and economic mode it seeks to destroy. By linking peacebuilding strategies to ecological restoration, community self-determination, and personal autonomy rooted in environmental resilience and an integrated resource base, an effective political therapy of sorts emerges to offer outlets to reduce crime and recidivism.

By looking at the conceptual structures inherent in various communiques, we have attempted to close the gap and clarify the distortion between the language of rebellion and the felt experience often limited or distorted by that language. In bringing into awareness the underlying drivers of attacks and exploring themes of anti-modernity and attacks on infrastructure or those that serve as proxies for it, we hope to break the strangle-hold of a metanarrative that normalizes ecocidal social relationships upon which the status quo depends.

## **Appendix:**

The five corporea are detailed as follows:

**Right-Wing Shooter corpus (RWS):** Six texts, originally authored in English, issued following far-right mass shootings. The corpus consists of “2083: A European Declaration of Independence,” (Anders Breivik, Oslo, Norway), “Last Rhodesian manifesto,” (Dylann Roof, Charleston, SC), “The Great Replacement,” (Brenton Tarrant, Christchurch, NZ), “An Open Letter,” (John Earnest, Poway, CA), “The Inconvenient

Truth,” (Patrick Crusius, El Paso, TX), and “A short pre-action report,” (Stephan Balliet, Halle, Germany).

**Individualists Tending Toward the Wild corpus (ITS):** 118 communiques from Individualists Tending Toward the Wild, 4/27/11-1/29/20, located from The Anarchist Library (See: <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/individualists-tending-toward-the-wild-communiques>) and Maldición Eco-extremista (see <http://maldicionecoextremista.altervista.org/>), as of 1 April 2020.

**Ted Kaczynski corpus:** The complete published works of Kaczynski as collected in Technological Slavery (2010), and Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How (2016).

**Accelerationist corpus:** A collection of six books advocating white power accelerationist violence consisting of Andrew Macdonald/William Pierce’s The Turner Diaries (1978), and Hunter (1989), James Mason’s Siege (2003), Wewelsburg Archives’s Path of God: Handbook for the 21st century fascist (2017), Alexander Slavros’s Zero Tolerance (2017), a collection published as Siege Culture (2019), and Mike Ma’s Harassment Architecture (2019). This corpus also contains a corpus developed for a prior study (known as the ‘AWD corpus’) consisting of the online writings, poster text, and audio/video transcripts of The Atomwaffen Division (2015-2019).

**Deep Green Resistance corpus (DGR):** A collection capturing the main strategic writings of the DGR leadership consisting of the complete text of Endgame, Vol. 1: The problem of civilization (Jensen, 2006), Endgame, Vol. 2: Resistance (Jensen, 2006), Deep Green Resistance (McBay, Keith and Jensen, 2011), Full Spectrum Resistance, Vol. 1: Building movements and fighting to win (McBay, 2019), and Full Spectrum Resistance, Vol. 2: Actions and strategies for change (McBay, 2019).

« Shit is funny »

-Anon seekin